



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For release August 22, 1995

Inez Connor 202-219-3861

SERVICE PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO HUNTING AND FISHING REGULATIONS, INCLUDING NONTOXIC SHOT REQUIREMENTS FOR HUNTING UPLAND GAME

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed amendments to revise or clarify hunting and fishing regulations on individual national wildlife refuges. These amendments include restoring the hunting of resident Canada geese during a special state season on Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge in Tennessee and modifying times and locations for fishing on several other units.

The proposed amendments, published in the August 16, 1995, Federal Register, would also, for the first time, limit hunters to using nontoxic (non-lead) shot on 43 national wildlife refuges while hunting small game such as pheasants, quail, rabbits, and snipe on upland areas near wetlands. This requirement applies only to those areas necessary to protect waterfowl and other migratory birds from the risk of lead poisoning.

As it did when nontoxic shot for upland game hunting was successfully implemented on West Coast refuges in 1991 and on Southwest refuges during the 1992-93 hunting season, the Service is coordinating with state wildlife agencies and the hunting community. In response to requests from North Dakota and South Dakota to improve coordination on state areas, implementation on all waterfowl production areas will be on a voluntary basis until 1998 when it will become mandatory. Alaska will begin implementation in 1997 as areas are identified.

Nontoxic shot was phased in nationwide for hunting waterfowl beginning in 1986 because of lead shot's toxicity to waterfowl and the secondary poisoning of bald eagles. Now wildlife biologists are becoming increasingly concerned about the threat posed by the long-term deposition of lead shot pellets into wetlands and associated uplands.

Hunting with lead shot on uplands immediately adjacent to wetlands and areas of seasonal flooding increases the risk that lead pellets may be consumed by waterfowl and other migratory birds during feeding activities in these highly concentrated wildlife areas. The use of nontoxic shot has substantially reduced lead deposition in most wetlands.

Refuge hunting and fishing programs are reviewed annually to determine whether individual refuge regulations should be modified or deleted. Hunting and fishing are regulated on

national wildlife refuges to ensure compatibility with refuge purposes, properly manage the wildlife resource, protect other refuge values, and ensure refuge user safety. Modifications are designed, to the extent practical, to make refuge hunting and fishing programs consistent with state regulations.

Written comments on the proposal will be accepted through September 15, 1995, and should be sent to the Assistant Director-Refuges and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C St., NW., MS 670 ARLSQ, Washington, DC 20240.

Information concerning hunting and fishing programs, including permits, conditions, the requirement for nontoxic shot, and maps of the respective areas, can be obtained from individual refuges or the regional offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the addresses listed below:

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Eastside Federal Complex, Suite 1692
911 NE. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181; Phone: 503-231-6214

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103; Phone: 505-766-1829

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, MN 55111; Phone: 612-725-3507

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard, Room 324
Atlanta, GA 30345; Phone: 404-679-7152

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035; Phone: 413-253-8550

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Box 25486
Denver, CO 80225; Phone: 303-236-8145

Assistant Regional Director - Refuges and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 E. Tudor Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99503; Phone: 907-786-3545

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